

# Byron L. Dorgan

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**North Dakota among states hit hard:**

## **DORGAN AND SENATE ENERGY COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE RISING ENERGY COSTS AND IMPACT ON FAMILIES, FARMERS AND COMMERCE**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) — U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND), a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said the committee will hold a hearing to examine the rising cost of crude oil, heating and transportation fuels. The hearing, set to begin at 9:30 a.m. this Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, in Room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building, will explore the impact those rising fuel costs are having on senior citizens, families, farmers and businesses throughout the nation.

Dorgan said the committee will seek to discover whether the rapidly rising fuel prices are the result of genuine market pressures or artificial price manipulation, as well as explore policy proposals to help make fuel more affordable.

"These hearings will be particularly important to North Dakotans who have seen the cost of home heating fuel rise 33 percent this winter," said Dorgan, who is a member of the Senate Energy Committee. "Gasoline prices in our state have increased by 45 percent since October 1999 and diesel fuel is up 43 percent over the same period of time. Those kinds of increases hit senior citizens, families, farmers and small businesses hardest."

"The recent increase in fuel prices has a big impact on rural states like North Dakota," Dorgan added. "Coming as it does in the winter months, the rise in prices makes it tough for low income elderly citizens to pay for home heating fuel. Farmers preparing for spring are also concerned that their planting costs will continue to spike up with the cost of gasoline and diesel fuel, further eroding an already bleak projection for the coming year's grain crop."

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